



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES CONSUMER AFFAIRS ADVISORY COMMISSION

Members of the Board

Gloria Molina
Mark Ridley-Thomas
Zev Yaroslavsky
Don Knabe
Michael D. Antonovich

"To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service"

November 20, 2014

Commissioners

Vivian Chan
Chair

Dennis Arguelles
Vice Chair

Joyce Ayvazi

Karine Bagdasarian

Ho-Jeong Eun

Ronnie Jayne

Joseph Lee

Helen Levin

Stanley Rogers

David E. Ryu

Sylvia Southerland

Kishean Wayne Tulloss

To: Supervisor Gloria Molina, 1st District
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, 2nd District
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, 3rd District
Supervisor Don Knabe, 4th District
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich, 5th District

From: Vivian Chan, Chair
Los Angeles County Consumer Affairs Advisory Commission

**Subject: Los Angeles County Consumer Affairs Advisory Commission
Annual Report - 2013**

As required by County Ordinance, I am pleased to submit the following annual report of the activities and accomplishments of the Los Angeles County Consumer Affairs Advisory Commission for calendar year 2013.

BACKGROUND

The Los Angeles County Consumer Affairs Commission (Commission) was established in 1980 and has continued pursuant to Board order under Chapter 3.13 of the Los Angeles County Code. The Commission is a non-regulatory body whose purpose is to represent the interests of consumers to the Director of the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) and the Board of Supervisors. The Commission is required to meet at least six times per year. Commissioners serve without compensation.

ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Commission is a valuable resource for the Director of the Department of Consumer Affairs. The Commissioners represent county residents on matters of concern to consumers. Commission meetings provide a forum to discuss emerging and ongoing consumer issues. During calendar year 2013, the Commission met six times. The Commission's activities and accomplishments included the following:

The purpose of the Consumer Affairs Advisory Commission is to provide advice, recommendations, and analysis to Director of Consumer Affairs and the Board of Supervisors on consumer needs and interests, consumer outreach and education, and Department programs and procedures.

- Assisted the department by bringing the Commission's collective experience as consumers, as members of the business community and as leaders in their own communities to bear on matters of concern to the department and local consumers.
- Participated in four Commission subcommittees to review important areas of interest for the Commission:
 - *Administrative Subcommittee* – began work on drafting a guide to assist Commissioners in their role on the Commission
 - *Foreclosure Subcommittee* – reviewed proposals for helping homeowners facing foreclosure and looking at solutions to help homeowners avoid foreclosure in the future
 - *Public Information Subcommittee* – provided feedback on the departments public information activities
 - Volunteer and Internship Subcommittee – developing new ideas for recruiting volunteers with a focus on individuals who will make a mid-term and long-term volunteer commitment to the department
- Made recommendations to the Director in areas such as:
 - New or enhanced outreach efforts that would improve the department's public outreach and consumer education
 - Strategies in the areas of financial literacy, homeownership education and services to homeowners facing foreclosure
 - Utilizing the Commissioners connections in their communities to help distribute consumer educational materials
 - Increasing outreach to local elected public officials so they could share information with their constituents
 - Ideas for recruiting volunteers and interns with specialized skills needed by the Department
 - Methods of increasing retention to convert short term volunteers and interns into volunteers that stay with the Department for a longer period of time
 - Partnering with nonprofit agencies to assist DCA in its volunteer recruitment

Many of these recommendations were implemented by the department and led to outcomes such as:

- Distribution of information by the Commissioners to their communities regarding consumer issues and services offered by the Department of

Consumer Affairs. Commissioners also assisted in hosting local events in their area where Consumer Affairs staff presented information to the public.

- Implementation of the Expanded Homeowner Notification Program
- Launching of the new DCA website
- Growth in the department's in the social media utilization and analysis
- Increased outreach to military service members

Commissioners invited and heard presentations by department staff and an outside representative on a variety of topics important to consumers. Experts in their respective fields were an invaluable resource to the Commission as it carried out its responsibilities during the past year. In their role as speakers, these presenters provided both oral and written information and remained available to Commissioners for any follow-up. Speakers included:

- Kristine Ovsepyan, Department of Consumer Affairs - Special Projects, shared with the Commission about current consumer legislation
- Patricia Carbajal, Chief Executive Office - Office of Intergovernmental and External Affairs, provided insight to the Commission regarding the legislative advocacy process at the County
- Dawnnesha Smith, Department of Consumer Affairs - Consumer Education and Public Outreach, discussed Covered California is and how it will affect local consumers

ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

For 2013, Dionne Faulk was elected Chair of the Los Angeles County Consumer Affairs Advisory Commission and Dennis Arguelles was elected Vice Chair.

Vivian Chan was elected Chair for calendar year 2014.

The members of the Commission wish to express their appreciation to the Board of Supervisors for providing them the opportunity to serve Los Angeles County and its residents. We look forward to the coming year and continuing what has been a successful and productive relationship with the Department of Consumer Affairs.